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Supplementary Report of the  
Police Council Committee  
on Higher Police Training  
on the Special Course at the  
Police College



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\*Colonel A. E. YOUNG, C.M.G., C.V.O.  
Mr. D. J. TREVELYAN (*Secretary*).

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\*In the place of Mr. B. N. Bebbington, O.B.E., who was originally appointed to the Committee.

# **SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE POLICE COUNCIL ON THE SPECIAL COURSE AT THE POLICE COLLEGE**

To the Rt. Hon. Henry Brooke, M.P.,  
Secretary of State for the Home Department.

SIR,

We were appointed, as a Committee of the Police Council, by Warrant of 20th July, 1961, to examine and report upon higher police training, other than matters such as the accommodation at the Police College and the content of the training for which the College authorities are responsible, upon assumptions approved by the Police Council on 28th June, 1961. Our first report on the special course for constables was presented on 19th December, 1961. The recommendations in this Report were accepted by the Police Council at its 81st Meeting on 16th January and subsequently approved by the then Secretary of State. Arrangements were put in hand for mounting a pilot special course this year and it began on 1st October with a reduced intake of 36 students.

2. Our report made certain recommendations as regards the selection procedure which might be adopted for students for the special course. After analysing the various methods which might be used, we proposed a compromise procedure based both on examination and extended interview techniques. Briefly, we recommended that in the first instance approximately half of those selected centrally for the course should be accepted solely on the marks obtained in the qualifying examination in police subjects for promotion from constable to sergeant, subject to endorsement by their chief constable, and that the remainder should be selected from amongst those next on the examination result list, but on the basis of tests of the extended interview type, subject to scrutiny of the results by a final selection board.

3. The Police Promotion Examinations Board, which as recommended in our Report, agreed to act as selection authority for the special course, adopted this selection procedure for the special course commencing on 1st October, 1962. The first 18 students automatically qualified for the course by means of their examination results, subject to endorsement by their promotion authority. The remaining 18 students were chosen by extended interview from those coming next on the examination list. Two selection teams (each composed of a Chairman and one other member from the police service and an additional non-service member) under a Director, Colonel Young, the Commissioner of Police for the City of London, interviewed the next 57 candidates on the appropriate examination lists, at the Police College during the period 15th July to 8th August. (Originally only 47 candidates were called for extended interview; but an additional 10 candidates were seen in order to widen the field for suitable students.) From the total of 57 the remaining 18 students were chosen. The selection of these students was approved by the Final Selection Board.

4. In recommending the selection procedure summarised above, we had it in mind that the special course was itself a new development and bound to be experimental; it would, therefore, be reviewed as soon as experience of its operation in practice was available. This too would apply to the selection procedure adopted for the first special course about extended interview techniques as applied to the Police Service, and we have reviewed our original recommendations on the selection procedure in the light of experience so far. Several of us had the opportunity to visit the Police College between 15th July and 8th August to see extended interview

techniques being employed, and we have had the advantage of a full report from Colonel Young, the Director of the selection teams, on the experience gained from the first series of extended interviews conducted in connection with the special course. This has led us to revise our original recommendations and we give below our conclusions on the selection procedure which might, we suggest, be used in connection with the next special course beginning in October, 1963.

### **Extended interview techniques**

5. In reviewing the selection procedure for the special course, its object must be kept in mind. The purpose of higher police training is stated in paragraph 13 of the White Paper on Police Training in England and Wales (Cmd. 1450) as follows:—

“It is . . . important, if the Service is to produce enough leaders of the right calibre, that training of the right sort should be available to those who have demonstrated that they are suitable for higher rank.”

If the special course is to play its part in providing training for potential leaders, then the selection procedure must be capable of identifying students who are most likely to benefit from this training.

6. In our original report we drew attention to the fact that extended interview techniques had not previously been used in the Service and that we had no positive evidence to show that they would be inherently more effective than the results of a written examination in selecting the officers of the greatest potential. We felt that there might be some initial scepticism about selection by extended interview. For this reason, we recommended that extended interview techniques should only be used for one half of the intake. In the light of the reports that we have received of the actual experience of the application of the techniques of extended interview we are satisfied that this procedure provides an unrivalled means of selecting the members of the special course. In the course of the two-and-a-half days spent under the close scrutiny of a team of senior police officers working with non-service members with wide experience of this technique, candidates have the best possible opportunity to demonstrate their personal qualities and their potentialities as senior officers. It is interesting to note that the candidates, both successful and unsuccessful, expressed their confidence in the procedure.

7. The need is accordingly to bring as many candidates within the field of extended interview as is practicable but at the same time to prevent candidates going forward to extended interview who are manifestly unsuitable for the course. At present, before a candidate can be considered for selection for the course, he must have done exceptionally well in the promotion examination in police subjects from constable to sergeant. We do not suggest any change in this: the written examination provides a valuable initial sift of candidates. It is manifestly fair, as a first step in the selection procedure, and is accepted as such by the Service. But the results of the promotion examination held in February, 1962, from which students were selected for the special course commencing on 1st October, 1962, showed that there was very little difference in the marks of the first hundred candidates in the list. The problem of the bunching of marks is, of course, bound to arise if written examinations are to be used to select candidates particularly when, as in this case, the examination is designed as a qualifying examination and not as a competitive examination and a very large number of candidates are spread over a comparatively small range of marks. But there is little doubt that there were candidates of considerable potential who under the present procedure did not have the opportunity of being considered for the first special course. This conclusion

is confirmed by the fact that several suitable candidates were found by the selection teams in the lower half of the 57 who went through the extended interview procedure. Although the marks of the candidates did not differ substantially, their potential for high rank in the Service varied considerably. With this experience in mind, we do not think that the police promotion examination *alone* should henceforward automatically provide a proportion of the students on the course. The ability to pass high in an examination of this kind is not necessarily an indication that the candidate possesses all the qualities of mind and character which will be required in a senior officer in the Service. We suggest, therefore, that all the candidates within the field for selection should pass through extended interviews before final selection.

8. We still consider, however, that at least until further experience is available of the results achieved on the course special treatment should be given to those at the top of the examination list and propose that they should automatically qualify for extended interview. We suggest, however, that before the candidates coming next in order qualify for extended interview they should be interviewed by a Central Selection Board which would have the task of selecting candidates suitable to go forward for extended interview and of rejecting those obviously unfit for the course. The criterion which might be applied is that candidates who in the view of the Central Selection Board show clearly that they do not have the potential to advance beyond the rank of inspector, should not be sent forward for extended interview.

9. These considerations lead us to suggest that the procedure for selecting the students to attend the second special course (the first full course of 60), which begins in the autumn of 1963, should be revised. There might be some advantage in waiting until the relative performance of the 36 who are attending the pilot course at the College could be taken into account. But any such delay would mean that the conclusions which to us are already abundantly apparent from the experience already gained would not have had any effect until the third course beginning in autumn 1964. The selection of the best officers for the special course is of such vital importance to the future of the police service that we do not think that this long delay in revising the selection procedure could be tolerated. It is very likely that further changes in the selection procedures for courses after 1963 may be found desirable in the light of further experience, but we do not think this should deter us from recommending the changes that are clearly necessary at present.

#### **Proposed selection procedure for 1963.**

10. If the recommendations set out above are accepted, the selection procedure for the special course commencing on 1st October, 1963, might be on the following lines. We assume, in the figures given below, that this course will comprise 60 students:—

- (i) The initial selection of students for the course should take place on the basis of the promotion examinations in police subjects from constable to sergeant held in November, 1962, and February, 1963. The chances of candidates taking the two examinations should be approximately the same and, since it is likely that a smaller number of candidates will present themselves for examination in November than in February—the proportion in previous years has been approximately two to five—the appropriate proportion of candidates will have to be taken from each examination.
- (ii) An aggregate of 30 candidates with the highest marks in the two examinations should go forward automatically for extended

interview; the precise number to be chosen in this way from each examination should depend upon the ratio of the numbers sitting for each examination.

- (iii) An aggregate of 240 candidates coming next in order in the examinations should be called for interview by the Central Selection Board which would have the responsibility of selecting from this number 90 candidates for extended interview. The Central Selection Board should, we suggest, comprise one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and a representative of each of the police associations (i.e. the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation). The Board will be able to apply a uniform standard. No member of this Board should be associated with the subsequent extended interview procedure.
- (iv) Approximately 120 candidates should go forward for extended interview (i.e., 30 who qualify automatically by reason of their place in the examination, together with 90 who are sent forward by the Central Selection Board). From these 60 would be selected for the course.

### **Administrative arrangements**

11. The figures given above are tentative and they have been included in order to clarify our proposals. It is clear from these figures that there will be considerable administrative difficulties in arranging for this revised selection procedure. At the same time as the proposed new procedure was coming into effect the selection machinery would—if the recommendations in our second report are accepted—be very fully occupied with the selection of officers to attend the first of the senior staff courses. But we think that if these courses are to be regarded as a permanent feature of the higher training arrangements for the police service, as is indicated by the White Paper of August, 1961, arrangements will have to be made to carry the administrative burden involved in a fair and efficient system of selection.

12. As regards the detail of our proposals for 1962-63, we understand from the Civil Service Commission that the results of the February examination will not be available until June and this leaves only just over three months to arrange for the interview of candidates by the Central Selection Board; the extended interviews; and the subsequent ratification of the recommendations of the selection teams by the Final Selection Board. There are methods of speeding up the various processes—for example, by increasing the number of selection teams which conduct the extended interviews—and the selection authority will, no doubt, be considering these. We suggest, however, that consideration should be given to the possibility of dealing with the candidates from the November, 1962, examination in advance of those from the February, 1963, examination. By the time the November examination has taken place, the nominations for the February examination will have been received and this will provide a rough guide to the proportion of entries for the two examinations. On this basis, the appropriate number of candidates from the November examination could be called for interview by the Central Selection Board, possibly before the results of the February examination are available. In view of the numbers involved, the extended interviews will, no doubt, have to be arranged so that candidates from the November examination will be dealt with first.

### **Metropolitan Police**

13. The Metropolitan Police were assigned a quota of places on the special course commencing on 1st October, 1962, and these places were

filled automatically by examination results or by extended interview broadly in the same way as students from provincial forces were selected. We have considered whether, if our recommendations above are accepted, these arrangements for a Metropolitan quota of students on the course should be brought to an end. It is agreed that it will be necessary to reserve a quota of places for extended interview for Metropolitan candidates and arrangements similar to those proposed above might also be regarded as appropriate for the Metropolitan Police; but some of us think that when Metropolitan candidates go on extended interview, the object should be to select them for the course on merits and in competition with provincial candidates. The aim would be to select the best candidate irrespective of the force from which he came. The representatives of the Police Federation consider, however, that in order to be fair to members of those provincial forces which do not have equivalent training for pre-promotion purposes to that which is in operation for the Metropolitan police, Metropolitan candidates should continue to be assigned a quota of places.

#### **Need for further review**

14. We must emphasize that the recommendations set out above are, in our view, as experimental as those made in our first Report and we have deliberately refrained from making any suggestions for the selection procedure to be used for students for special courses to be held after 1963. We are very conscious of the fact that there is still a good deal to be learnt from the operation of selection techniques in the Service. It is clear to us, however, that sufficient experience has been gained from the selection techniques used in connection with the special course commencing on 1st October, 1962, to justify the change in procedure proposed above even before there has been an opportunity to assess the results of the pilot special course.

#### **Summary of recommendations**

15. (i) The selection procedure for the special course should be reviewed to ensure that it is best fitted to identify students who are most likely to benefit from the course (paragraph 5).

(ii) The techniques of extended interview provide an unrivalled means of selecting the members of the special course (paragraph 6).

(iii) The need is to bring as many candidates within the field of extended interview as is practicable but at the same time to prevent candidates going forward for extended interview who are manifestly unsuitable (paragraph 7).

(iv) The police promotion examination provides a valuable initial sift of candidates and should continue to be used as such; but the examination alone should not henceforward provide a proportion of the students on the course. All candidates within the field for selection should pass through extended interviews before final selection (paragraph 7).

(v) The chances of candidates taking the November and February examinations should be approximately the same and the appropriate proportion of candidates from each examination should be called for extended interview (paragraph 10 (i)).

(vi) Until further experience is available of the results achieved on the course, candidates at the top of the two examination lists should automatically qualify for extended interview; the precise number to be chosen in this way from each examination should depend upon the ratio of the numbers sitting for each examination (paragraphs 8 and 10 (ii)).



(vii) Candidates coming next in order should be interviewed by a Central Selection Board which should reject those candidates who show clearly that they do not have the potential to advance beyond the rank of inspector (paragraph 8).

(viii) The Central Selection Board should comprise one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary and one representative from each of the police associations (i.e. the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation) (paragraph 10 (iii)).

(ix) The candidates not rejected by the Central Selection Board should go forward for extended interview. Approximately two candidates should be called for interview for each place on the course (paragraph 10 (iv)).

(x) The selection authority should consider methods of speeding up the processes of selection in order to deal with the greater numbers involved (paragraph 12).

(xi) The new arrangements for selection should apply to candidates for the special course beginning in the autumn of 1963 (paragraph 9).

(xii) The new selection arrangements should be reviewed in the light of experience gained from the selection of students for the special course beginning in the autumn of 1963 (paragraph 14).

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

(Signed)

K. A. L. Parker (*Chairman*).

P. Biggs.

S. G. Church.

A. C. Evans.

S. Hand.

S. Hodgson.

J. Hoy.

W. Johnson.

B. G. Lampard-Vachell.

D. A. C. Morrison.

H. R. Neate.

J. Simpson.

F. T. Tarry.

C. White.

R. P. Wilson.

A. B. Young.

D. J. Trevelyan (*Secretary*).

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